

REMARKS

In the March 28, 2006 Advisory Action and the January 3, 2006 Office Action, claims 12, 15-18, 25 and 26 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claims 1-11, 20, 22 and 24 were indicated as allowable. Claims 13, 14, 19 and 21 were withdrawn as being drawn to a non-elected species. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the March 28, 2006 Advisory Action and the January 3, 2006 Office Action, Applicants have amended claim 20 to place it into independent form to accept the allowable subject matter as indicated above. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 1-22, 24 and 25 are pending, with claims 1, 7, 11, 20 and 22 being the independent claims. Allowance of the pending claims is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Election of Species

In paragraph 1 of the Office Action, Applicants' election without traverse in the response filed November 1, 2004 was acknowledged. Thus, non-elected claims 13, 14, 19, 21 and 23 are withdrawn from further consideration. Applicants respectfully request that non-elected claims 13, 14, 19 and 21 be rejoined in this application upon allowance of a generic claim.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, claims 12, 15-18, 25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,791,671 (Tang) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,435,983 (Shimano).

Applicants have amended claims 12 and 25 to their original form so that they depend from claims 1 and 22, respectively. Thus, claims 12, 15-18 and 25 depend from claims that were indicated as allowable. Claim 26 has been cancelled.

"If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious." MPEP §2143.03 citing *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 12, 15-18 and 25 are patentable over Tang and Shimano since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claims 1 and 22.

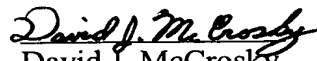
Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Office Action, claims 1-11, 22 and 24 were allowed while claim 20 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. In response, Applicants have amended claim 20 to place it in independent form.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1-22, 24 and 25 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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Dated: April 21, 2006
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